

Chapter 5

Rights and Title to Cemetery Lots

8-5-1 Unused or unkept lots -- Notice procedures.

- (1) If a municipality or cemetery maintenance district owns a cemetery and has conveyed cemetery lots or parcels by deed with or without restrictions, and the grantee, or persons claiming through the grantee, for more than 60 years:
 - (a) have not used portions of the lots or parcels for purposes of burial and have not provided for the care of the lots or parcels beyond that uniformly provided for all lots of the cemetery, and during the 60-year period have not given the municipality or cemetery maintenance district written notice of any claim or interest in the lots or parcels; or
 - (b) have not used a portion of the lots or parcels for purposes of burial and have not kept the lots or parcels free of weeds or brush, but have allowed it to remain entirely unimproved for more than 20 years, and the lots or parcels are located in the portion of the cemetery where they adjoin or are adjacent to improved parts of the cemetery and by reason of their unimproved condition detract from the appearance of the cemetery, interfere with its harmonious improvements, and furnish a place for the growth of weeds and brush, then the municipality or cemetery maintenance district shall demand of the grantee or persons claiming through the grantee either of the following:
 - (i) that they file with the municipality or cemetery maintenance district a written notice of claim or interest in and to the lots or parcels recorded by evidence of their claim of ownership within 50 days after the service of a copy of the notice of demand; or
 - (ii) that they keep the premises clear of weeds and in a condition of harmony with other adjoining lots.
- (2) The municipality or cemetery maintenance district shall serve a copy of the demand or notice required by Subsection (1) on the grantee or persons claiming through the grantee in accordance with the Utah Rules of Civil Procedure.

Amended by Chapter 123, 2002 General Session

8-5-2 Action in district court for title to lots.

If either the grantee, or person claiming through the grantee, fails to comply with the demand or notice, the municipality or cemetery maintenance district may bring an action in the district court of the county in which the cemetery is located against all parties who have not responded to the notice for the purpose of terminating the rights of the parties in the lots or parcels and restoring the lots or parcels to the municipality or cemetery maintenance district free of any right, title, or interest of the grantee, persons claiming through the grantee, their heirs, or assigns. Any action to reclaim title to grave sites, parcels, or lots shall be brought and determined in the same manner as actions concerning other real property. The portion of any grave site, lot, or parcel in which a body is buried may not be included in any action to revest title to the lot, site, or parcel in the municipality or cemetery maintenance district, and the grave site in which a body is interred shall remain undisturbed together with any adjoining property so as to allow the proper approach to the grave site.

Amended by Chapter 123, 2002 General Session

8-5-3 Abandonment -- Standards -- Prima facie evidence.

The fact that the grantee or holder of a lot or parcel in a cemetery has not used portions of the lots or parcels for the purpose of burial for more than 60 years shall be prima facie evidence that the grantee or holder had abandoned the lots or parcels if during that time the grantee or holder:

- (1) has not provided the care to the lots or parcels provided uniformly to all lots or parcels within the cemetery;
- (2) has not given to the municipality or cemetery maintenance district a written notice of claim or interest in the lots or parcels; or
- (3) has not kept the lots or parcels free of weeds or brush.

Amended by Chapter 123, 2002 General Session

8-5-4 Copy of judgment to be filed with county recorder.

A certified copy of the judgment in the action to revest title to cemetery lots, sites, or parcels shall be filed with the county recorder in the county in which the lots, sites, or parcels are located.

Enacted by Chapter 132, 1985 General Session

8-5-5 Proceeds of resale of lots.

The proceeds from the subsequent resale of any lot or parcel, title to which has been revested in the municipality or cemetery maintenance district under Section 8-5-2 or 8-5-6, less the costs and expenses incurred in the proceeding, shall become part of the permanent care and improvement fund of the municipality or cemetery maintenance district, subject to subsequent disposition under Title 10, Chapter 5, Uniform Fiscal Procedures Act for Utah Towns, Title 10, Chapter 6, Uniform Fiscal Procedures Act for Utah Cities, or Title 17B, Chapter 1, Part 6, Fiscal Procedures for Local Districts.

Amended by Chapter 329, 2007 General Session

8-5-6 Alternative council or board procedures for notice -- Termination of rights.

- (1) As an alternative to the procedures set forth in Sections 8-5-1 through 8-5-4, a municipal council or cemetery maintenance district board may pass a resolution demanding that the owner of a lot, site, or portion of the cemetery, which has been unused for burial purposes for more than 60 years, file with the county recorder, city recorder, or town clerk notice of any claim to the lot, site, or portion of the cemetery.
- (2) The municipal council or cemetery maintenance district board shall then cause a copy of the resolution to be personally served on the owner in the same manner as personal service of process in a civil action. The resolution shall notify the owner that the owner shall, within 60 days after service of the resolution on the owner, express interest in maintaining the cemetery lot, site, or portion of the cemetery and submit satisfactory evidence of an intention to use the lot, site, or portion of the cemetery for a burial.
- (3) If the owner cannot be personally served with the resolution of the municipal council or cemetery maintenance district board as required in Subsection (2), the municipal council or cemetery maintenance district board shall publish its resolution:
 - (a)
 - (i) for three successive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation within the county; and
 - (ii) in accordance with Section 45-1-101 for three weeks; and
 - (b) mail a copy of the resolution within 14 days after the publication to the owner's last known address, if available.

- (4) If, for 30 days after the last date of service or publication of the municipal council's or cemetery maintenance district board's resolution, the owner or person with a legal interest in the cemetery lot fails to state a valid interest in the use of the cemetery lot, site, or portion of the cemetery for burial purposes, the owner's rights are terminated and that portion of the cemetery shall be vested in the municipality or cemetery maintenance district.

Amended by Chapter 388, 2009 General Session

8-5-7 Sale of only right to be buried.

Municipalities and cemetery maintenance districts shall sell only the right to be buried in the cemetery and all cemetery lots or parcels sold by a municipality after April 29, 1985, or by a cemetery maintenance district after June 1, 2001 shall be rights to be buried only. Nothing in this section shall prevent municipalities or cemetery maintenance districts from imposing additional terms on the sale of rights to burial.

Amended by Chapter 123, 2002 General Session

8-5-8 Municipal and maintenance district cemeteries -- Rights of lot holders -- Compensation -- Perpetual care charges.

- (1) The owner, grantee, or person claiming through the grantee shall have the right, on presentation of the certificate of title or right to burial to the municipality or cemetery maintenance district, for any lot or parcel which has reverted to the municipality or cemetery maintenance district, at the option of the municipality or cemetery maintenance district, to:
- (a) be compensated for the lot or parcel at the reasonable value of the lot or parcel as of the date the certificate is presented to the municipality or cemetery maintenance district;
 - (b) receive a right to burial to another lot or parcel if the right to burial or title to the lot or parcel has been sold by the municipality or cemetery maintenance district; or
 - (c) receive the right to burial to the lot or parcel if the municipality or cemetery maintenance district has not sold the right to burial to the lot or parcel.
- (2) Nothing in this section prevents a municipality or cemetery maintenance district from collecting unpaid perpetual care charges from a person claiming title or the right to burial.

Amended by Chapter 123, 2002 General Session